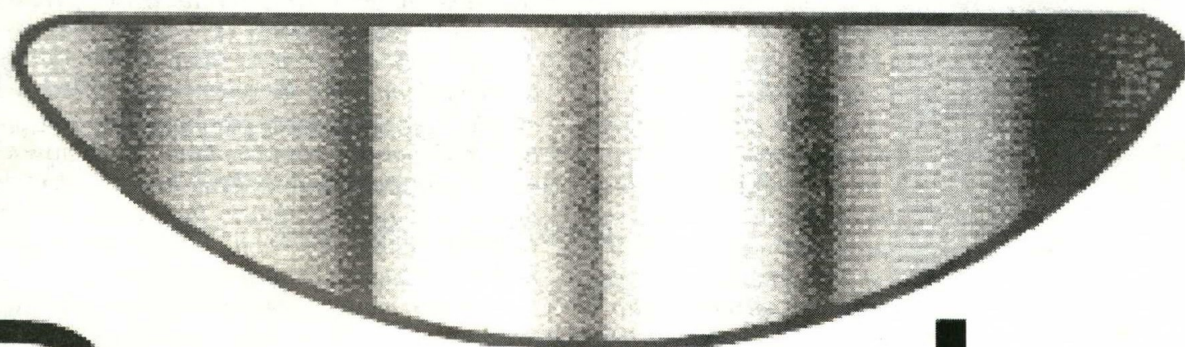


MARCH, 1997

HERMES

WESLEYAN'S MAGAZINE OF POLITICAL, CRITICAL, AND CREATIVE THOUGHT



People®

TALK

COLORED

7 PIECES



CAMPUS DIARY

The Hermes Gets Personal

Hermes spends a lot of time trying to provide a little perspective on campus, regional, and national political issues. Every once in a while, we need to take a breather and try and get some perspective of our own. When you're constantly pounding the pulpit about one cause or another, it's surprisingly easy to lose track of the larger issues your cause is about.

Well here's a reminder for everybody: If it isn't about people, it isn't about anything.

It's people who shape the issues we discuss, it's people who crusade for the causes we report on, and most importantly it's people who are affected by our political decisions. Try having a conversation with a poor single mother before you take a stand on welfare. Before you start spouting the rhetoric of, say, the John Birch Society, take a look at the people running it. If you want to know why our inner cities are crumbling, spend some time talking to a gang member.

One thing that zooming in on an individual does is to give a perspective on society a little bit different than what we get through the mainstream media. We don't just get to see how our social structures are perceived by someone outside the mainstream (who's inside it, really?), we get to see how they impact that person as well. "For a portrait of the world entire, seek its reflection in one man's eye."

Since "Where is my life going?" syndrome seems to be a common affliction among college-age folks nowa-

days, focusing on a specific person's life provides another valuable asset: a sense of what's out there. You're not going to find the 10:00 news documenting the life of a road-tripping hippy or a pamphlet-pushing activist. The same way it's nice to read a sample essay before you sit down to write one, it's nice to examine someone else's life before you start planning your own.

Humanizing various causes by looking at the individual also provides a valuable reminder of what you're fighting for. When we forget who our cause is supposed to benefit, the cause itself becomes suspect. It becomes possible to slip into the trap of activism for its own sake, to get hooked on the sense of righteousness and public response.

We have a student on campus who feels so strongly about dining that he organized a 'spontaneous' riot and has posted stickers reading: "Eat Shit and Enjoy It!" With poverty rates climbing, wage-gaps widening, our prison population skyrocketing, and a nuclear plant dumping radiation in the Connecticut River less than 20 minutes upstream, you sometimes wish people had a little more perspective in choosing their battles.

A little more perspective is all we're trying to give.

-Brian Edwards-Tiekert



About Hermes

Around seven issues of *Hermes* are produced a year. We publish a wide range of material, including articles on campus life, activism and social commentary from a critical viewpoint. *Hermes* serves as a forum for progressive and radical activists on campus to express their ideas; this is done with the hope of increasing activism and social awareness at Wesleyan. Despite being definitely on the left, we aren't mindlessly so, thus we encourage criticism and controversy.

The staff of *Hermes* meets once a week in the WSA building (190 High St.). We are organized in a collective, nonhierarchical, informal manner. There are no permanent positions and nobody is in charge; decisions are made by the entire staff. New people are encouraged to show up and get involved at any time. In addition to writers, we need people willing to do proof-reading, editing, photography and lay-out. And if you don't like what you find written here — join us and write your own articles.

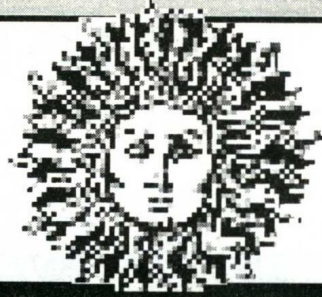


All opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the *Hermes* staff.

HERMES

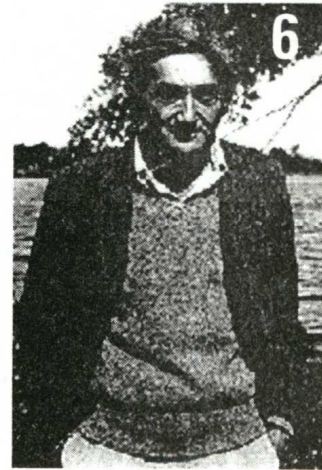
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Oprah Winfrey	Dan Young
Dan Rather	John Kamp
Jane Pauley	Laura Clawson
Murphy Brown	Janet Han
Jim Hightower	Livia Gershon
G. Gordon Liddy	Drew Tipson
Geraldo Rivera	Sarah Wilkes
Kermit the Frog	Emily Katz
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Cover by John Kamp

**Straight
but not
narrow**



Letters Letters Letters

Dear Daniel Young,

I'm writing to say that I enjoyed your article on communism very much. However, I still have some questions which I am unable to resolve with regard to owning the means of production. My understanding of the idea of owning such means is that the owners of the means of production come up with the capital to buy/build the means of production. For example, let's say Henry Ford decides he wants to build a car factory. He doesn't have all of the money himself to buy the necessary machines and factory space, so he approaches potential investors who supply the money for a stake in the profits. This would be similar to someone who takes out a loan from a bank, except that a bank *must* be paid back with interest, while an investor assumes a certain amount of risk: s/he has no guarantee of return, and so s/he stakes some money on the possibility that the venture will succeed. The reward for increased risk is greater profit; instead of interest, s/he receives dividends from profits, and may (or may not) recoup the original invested capital by selling her/his ownership in the company.

My understanding of one problem with capitalism is that on very successful ventures, owners (shareholders) of the means of production may profit wildly, while "employees" do not necessarily reap the benefits. However, what I feel important to recognize is that "employees" are, in a practical sense, part of the means of production. An employee's pay is guaranteed, whether the company succeeds wildly, or fails stupendously. The employee sells her/his labor as part of the means of production; employee salaries are included in the assessment of the initial capital required for a start-up venture.

While it does seem unfair—even to me—that our capitalist society is so economically stratified such that there are incredible gaps between standards of living, it does not seem to me to be the fair solution to blame the shareholders in capitalism (bourgeoisie) for all of its problems. Without investors who are willing to assume risk (and I hardly think that any government is willing to back every potential small business entrepreneur with capital) the capitalist system doesn't work. So what do I propose then? I am very interested in the idea of employee-ownership, one of those ideas that seems to be tossed around by big corporations these days. That is, let the employees of a company buy in to the company. Of course, it may not be as easy as it sounds. I doubt that there are enough idealistic people out there who are willing to agree to a (future) job with a start-up, and to supply it with even a small fraction of the capital. Initial investors will probably always be required. But slowly it could be possible for employees to buy stock in the company, perhaps facilitated by the company itself. I know that there are companies today that are utilizing at least some part of that idea.

Of course, our society's economic problems do not simply end there. But then, I'm an English major, not an Econ major
What do you think?

—Zack Becker

Daniel Responds:

Zack—If you don't blame the bourgeoisie, then who do you blame? In a Marxist model there can be no other culprit. And though it is the way a capitalist usually thinks, why is it at all necessary that an employee's salary be set and not influenced by a company's level of success? It is this thinking about the proletariat only in terms of his/her labor power which Marx finds to be one of the most immoral, exploitative facets of modern capitalism. It is also this facet which allows the proletariat to be wholly alienated from their

labor, taking no joy, pride or interest in what they do because the pay for their labor power is already set. Even capitalist management can see that such a situation of alienation is basically antithetical to competent, productive labor. Workers must feel that they somehow have a vested interest in their labor in order to feel real attachment to it—some workers feel such an interest simply based on religious or moral ideals (ie. the Protestant work ethic), others have such an interest instilled by effective managers and promises of increased wages and benefits (which have just as much chance

of not coming as they do of actually being given) but many people are left floating, unattached to what the jobs that they do.

This ties in with the reasons that I too am beginning to see the idea of a socialist or anarcho-syndicalist system of employee-owned companies as an increasingly more realistic alternative for capitalism, at least in the United States. My reasons are two-fold: first, though it would still require a large scale change of American society, such a change would be very much in line with current American ideals of personal success. Millions of immigrants have come to the United

States because of the American dream that increased freedoms would allow them to achieve new, high standards of living through economic freedom. However for many of these immigrants there is a ceiling on this increase of economic power and standard of living. Having brought no capital from the homeland, they have no way to buy into the means of production, and they and their descendants have been stuck hawking their labor power to the bourgeoisie every since. But if every large and small company were to become owned

always been to abolish the proletariat's alienation from his/her labor, allowing them to enjoy or at least take individual interest in the job that they performed. In a system of employee ownership such attachment is easy to understand—people know that they own the means of production in the industry in which they work, and that they benefit directly from their industry's success

(and therefore the success of their individual labor). This labor can then become fully integrated into their individual identity. This can be seen as a much more tangible connection between

proletariat and labor than might exist under a full communist regime where “everyone” is supposed to own “everything” and benefit from “everyone’s” labor. The directness of the nature of ownership in an employee owned system would also be less ripe for the power plays of greedy politicians than under full Marxist communism, because private ownership of the means of production would still exist, and therefore could not be appropriated by others under false pretenses.

Well, without a great deal of economic knowledge myself I hope that I have managed to answer your questions, Zack. I am also an English major, but you don't have to understand a

social or economic system down to its smallest details to know that its immoral, or know that its basic precepts are failing. If anyone has any more questions or corrections, please write back again. Get free, people...

Love,

Daniel Dylan Young

While it does seem unfair—even to me—that our capitalist society is so economically stratified such that there are incredible gaps between standards of living, it does not seem to me to be the fair solution to blame the shareholders in capitalism (bourgeoisie) for all of its problems.

—Zack Becker

by its employees, these laborers would begin to exercise real economic power, and thus increased political power as well. This change is one which could take place inside the context of America's current economic system. It would require workers and labor unions from a wide variety of industries asking for the creation of stock purchasing options, or asking for an increase in the levels of employee stock ownership where they already existed. It might give America's labor unions a higher purpose than simply squabbling over a wage here or a benefit there, as the new prime objective of every labor union would become the complete buyout of their industry's stock.

A system of employee-owned corporations could definitely be an easier (and perhaps an interim) step toward a real communist state in America. However, such a system might actually be more desirable than full communism, and this is my second argument in its favor. One of Marxist communism's main goals has

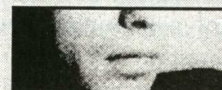
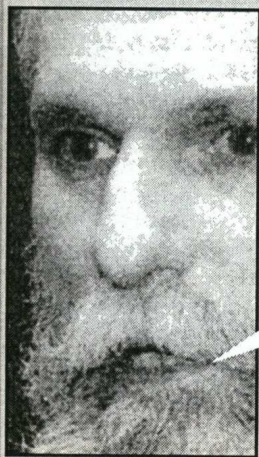
If you don't blame the bourgeoisie, then who do you blame? In a Marxist model there can be no other culprit.

—Daniel Young

Write to Us!!

We welcome any criticism, praise, or outright rage over the content of our articles, so if you've got a bone to pick, send your opinions on over to:

Hermes, c/o WSA
Wesleyan Station
Middletown, CT 06459



HOWARD ZINN

Trevor Griffey: In "A People's History of the United States," you referred to a group which you called 'The Establishment.' In last night's speech at Wesleyan, you talked about a 'them' and you said in parentheses 'you know there is a them, don't you?' Would you elaborate on what that group called 'The Establishment' or 'them' is, and why you talk about such a group?

AN INTERVIEW BY
TREVOR GRIFFEY

Howard Zinn: I don't know if he's still read, but in the 1950s, C Wright Mills' book, "The Power Elite," was a very great influence on the emerging New Left and you might say it was a kind of an Americanized version of the old phrase, 'the ruling class.' C Wright Mills described the power elite as a sort of combination of the political leaders of the country and the military heads and the big corporate moguls who circulated among one another. When I say 'they,' I suppose I mean the upper part of that one percent of the country that owns 6.8 trillion dollars of wealth: the super rich, corporate leaders of the country who control the media. I mean the heads of the Republican and Democratic parties, the corporate interests that they serve, and the interests that basically support what they do.

And this is a group of people that act in accordance with one another, that is in agreement on what they do? Is this a coherent group?

No, it's coherent enough to establish their distance from the rest of the country— certainly from the working classes and the middle classes. But there are divisions and distinctions within the group. There's always been a division between those who concentrate on short term gains and were more ruthless therefore and those who thought in the longer run and saw the danger of demanding too much immediately and creating the possibility of rebellion. The difference between the Democratic and Republican parties are the differences in this ruling group.

Also in last night's speech you said that 'we need a new movement.' Do you care to clarify or expand upon what you meant by that?

I was making the point that we've never had any important change in this country without a social movement, that it's never come from the formal structures of government because those formal structures are dominated by wealth. Disenfranchised people have always had to create their own movement. Yet here we

are in the US today and we don't have the Vietnam War to mobilize a population and we don't have a sort

of legalized racial segregation that galvanized large numbers of Americans in the 1960s, but we have an ongoing economic sickness and cultural and moral sickness that obviously requires a new movement to do something about [it] because the political leaders of the country today— Republican and Democrat— are in fact closer together than they ever were before. The Clinton administration has dismantled social programs, spent less money to help people, maintained a large military budget, and has served the financial interests on Wall Street. The need for a new social movement today to turn the country around in its economic program, to begin to take back the enormous amount of wealth that has accumulated at the top, that need is a very very urgent one.

Now exactly what form this movement will take is difficult to say, but it seems to me that it would have to encompass the various interests in the different groups which are today working for their own agendas— the feminist movement, the anti-military movement, the environmental movement, the black movement, and the labor movement. All of these groups are not very powerful today and they will not have any power until they begin to combine.

When I look for a common denominator for all these groups— an issue that touches on all their concerns— it seems clear to me that it's the allocation of wealth in this country. Because all the groups' greivances depend upon funds— all of them are starved for resources. The job issue is crucial for the nation. It is the critical element in the spread of crime and the use of drugs and the desperation which young people feel in the country. We need full employment in this country and that will take a lot of money. But both parties refuse to commit government money to job programs. And so my argument is that if we're gonna have a movement in this country, the central issue that I think can draw all the strands of the population together— that 80% of the population whose income has declined in the last fifteen years, working class, middle class, underclass— is an insistence on a reallocation of the enormous wealth of this country.

That seems like the same argument that the New Party's putting forward.

The New Party has a very clear understanding of this problem.

You referred to the Declaration of Independence

in last night's speech as a guide for this potential movement because of its famous phrase "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Yet at the same time, it doesn't seem to me that the US has ever had a popular tradition of socialism. The Civil Rights movement could appeal to many Americans because they believed, at least abstractly, in universal suffrage and equal opportunity. But can the "pursuit of happiness," which isn't even in the Constitution, really be understood as a basis for a massive redistribution of wealth? Is socialism really so deeply rooted in the American tradition?

Well, when I say it's deep rooted in the American tradition, I mean yes, it's there. It's in the Declaration of Independence. I think if you ask people whether they believe in the principle that governments are set up to ensure the equal right of people to pursue life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, people will say yes. That of course doesn't mean much until you get to the specifics of it. I think that if you ask the American people if they want socialism, they would say no. But if you took the very individual elements of socialism and posed them to people one by one, the answer would be yes. If you asked whether everyone should have health care even if they don't have any money, if you asked whether people should be guaranteed jobs if they want to work, if there should be adequate housing for everyone, if there should be a better distribution of wealth than there is today, I think people would answer all these questions in such a way that

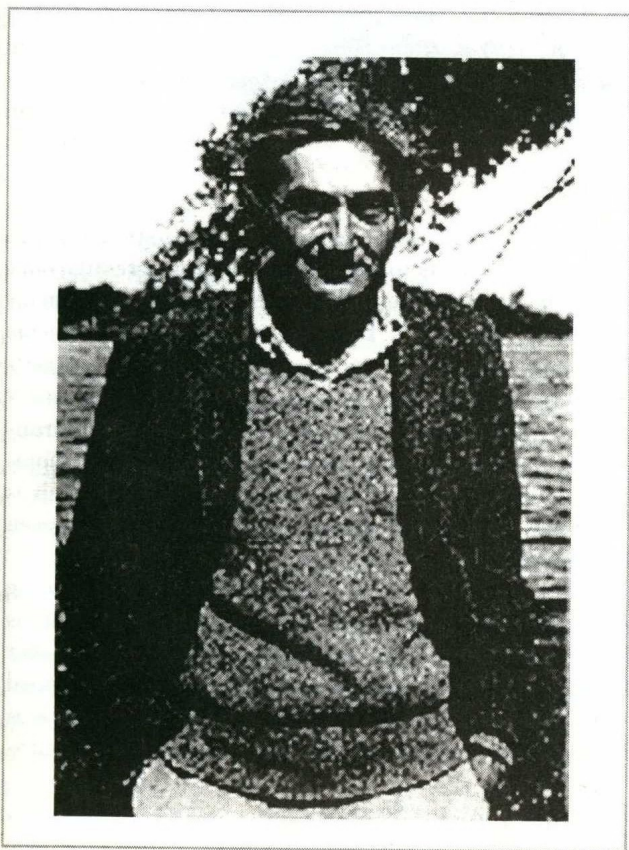
it would add up to a socialist program if you left out the slogans. I have no doubt that a very large number of American people can be mobilized around a program like that. It's a matter of having a movement and an organization which can take that program to the people and explain it and connect it with what is going on today and deal with issues like taxation and the balanced budget and clarify those things which are constantly being obfuscated by the politicians and the media.

In the end of "A People's History," you conclude not with another critique of the US government but with a speculative attempt to create a utopia to work towards. Could you elaborate on that and to what extent this vision influences you in your speaking, writing, and past activism?

I suppose I'm motivated by some vision of what a good society would be like. And I would call that vision, if I had to put it in a phrase, democratic socialism. But that has to be explained, since democracy is too vague a term and socialism has all sorts of connotations—some of which are bad.

I have a vision of society in which corporate power has been taken away from the economy and the media and the political system; in which we have democracy in politics and economics in the sense that we have economic enterprises in which workers and consumers have as much power as managers; in which enterprises and the economy are run really by the people who work there and by people who are consumers of the product; in which there are not absentee wealthy people who benefit and accumulate great fortunes as a result of the work done by the managers and workers. So I see an economic system which is democratic, in which there is truly progressive taxation. I can see a society in which there is a floor of basic needs—health, housing, food, and education—which is taken care of for everybody and everything beyond that is a luxury. I think that such economic conditions would make it easier to erode the long legacy of racism in this country—a racism which is enforced and reinforced by economic inequality. And of course, requirements of equal pay for equal work—for women and all races. I see a society in which there are no restrictions on people's sexuality and private life. In other words, a culture which is democratic, an economy which is democratic, a political system with increased participation.

We can't get too specific, and may have to work at it one piece at a time. I don't think we can believe anymore in one cataclysmic or revolutionary moment in which everything suddenly changes, but we can believe in something which is revolutionary but takes more time and therefore has much deeper roots and more longevity. We can believe in something which is more solid and is accompanied by a change in consciousness in people about the world and their place in it.





Killed by the Messenger

B Y D R E W T I P S O N

In "Iron and Silk", a novella by Mark Salzman, I came across a passage in which a naive American teacher asks his Chinese students how they can believe their own Communist-controlled newspapers instead of the American free press. One of his students responds: "Why that's simple—your newspapers are run by capitalist oppressors, so of course they will print whatever makes them look good. But our newspapers are controlled by the people—why would they lie to us?" Granted, I was and still am quite skeptical of who "the people" are in this statement, but I couldn't help thinking that there might be some truth in this observation of the American media. It turns out there's a great deal of truth to it.

Today, the Constitutional guarantee to "freedom of the press," one of the most venerated tenets of U.S. democracy, is helping to tear apart the very ideal it is based upon. From The Washington Post to supposedly "public" television, our modern news media is primarily controlled by large corporate interests who routinely pervert the standards of journalistic integrity, unbiased reporting, and even political neutrality. Furthermore, most of these large media outlets fight to economically eradicate smaller, independent, or dissenting news sources (re. "The Crack Conspiracy" in Dec '96 issue of the *Hermes*). The First Amendment protects the actions of these media powers, yet because they monopolize the content and public perception of "the news," they in effect violate the very spirit of the law.

Trying to counter these large media interests is the primary focus of FAIR (Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting), a media watchdog group based in New York. FAIR's online archives contain countless examples of how media bias subtly manipulates the political, moral, and historical debates. I'll summarize just a few of them to illustrate how modern media bias operates:

The most obvious mechanism for influencing the news is screening the stories that get published in the first place. Todd Putnam, editor of National Boycott News, was recently contacted by an NBC reporter who wanted to do a story on current influential boycotts. When Putnam told her that the biggest boycott was against GE, owner of NBC since 1986, she immediate-

ly responded, "We can't do that one. Well, we could do that one, but we won't." After learning that most of the other major boycotts were against corporations with large advertising shares, the story was dropped entirely.

If that doesn't bother you, then recent firings of liberal and populist columnists should. Colin McCarthy, nicknamed the "conscience" of The Washington Post for his anti-war sentiments and stories on the lives of the poor, was "let go" last month without explanation.

You may not remember his work—he was the one who wrote all those condemnations of U.S. conduct in the Persian Gulf War were never published in The Washington Post.

Barbara Reynolds, one of the few black feminists in the mainstream news, also lost her job without explanation last November. USA Today certainly did not fire her because she was unpopular. Perhaps it had something to do with her constant criticism of the media's total lack of interest in covering increasing urban economic destitution—something she was told "just wasn't interesting anymore". Urban poverty is still growing steadily. Mainstream news coverage on the subject is steadily falling.

News shows like The News Hour with Jim Lehrer, whose guest experts are nearly all white males, go as far as to ban all critics of progressive policy from the show—Lehrer himself labels them "moaners" and "whiners." In countless discussion segments on Central America not a single guest on Lehrer's show has represented the large and vocal anti-intervention movement. During discussions on environmental issues only one out of seventeen guests represented the concerns of environmental groups. This is the kind of balanced discussion of issues we get, even on public television.

But there are more subtle means of manipulating news content, such as placing questionable emphasis on certain facts and neglecting others. Consider Martin Luther King Jr., whose birthday was celebrated nationally a month ago. Every year news programs and national papers roll out the same historical retrospective, the grainy "I have a dream" video on TV, and read a short reflection on his assassination. If you look carefully at the dates of King's life, however,

"Since most people base their political judgments on a few powerful media outlets, the performance of these institutions cries out for scrutiny." -Fairness and Accuracy In Reporting's (FAIR)

you'll notice that his last two years seem to have disappeared. That's because the media spent those two years viciously attacking King for his views on poverty and American imperialism. After the Civil Rights acts passed in 1965, King saw the next step as advancing economic reforms and "human rights"—without which he believed "civil rights" would be a hollow victory without. Just before his assassination King had already planned a second march on Washington, this time with a multiracial "army of the poor" who would demand "a poor people's Bill of Rights." For this the press charged him with "insurrection."

King also challenged America's military and economic abuses abroad in a speech called "Beyond Vietnam." King called the United States "the greatest purveyor of violence today," and noted that western businesses were investing in economically underdeveloped countries "only to take the profits out with no concern for the social betterment of the countries." In response, Time magazine called him a "demagogic slanderer", his speech "a script from Radio Hanoi." The Washington Post went so far as to claim that King had "diminished his usefulness" to the country. Northern-based mainstream media certainly find King's image useful today—but only to chastise the more blatant *southern* brand of racism. Nothing is mentioned when it comes to King's views on the more insidious *northern* economic classism, his criticism of large abusive corporations, and his insinuation that the U.S. was corrupt as a "policeman of the world"—nothing is remembered.

Press coverage is supposed to be balanced—presenting all sides of a story. But often this "balanced" coverage is "balanced" between two relatively similar positions—representing only the views among powerful politicians and lobbyists in Washington. Other interests viewpoints are shut out, as they were during the recent welfare debate. A FAIR survey found that only 10% of media sources during this debate represented

"recipients of welfare and social services." While these people were crucial to the discussion, this small percentage were never allowed to make their case. News commentators, like Diane Sawyer (est. yearly salary 7 million), went so far as to ridicule their concerns on the air. More disturbing is the limited degree of research reporters put into the story—only 9% of sources consulted had done any sort of study into the effects of welfare at all. Most reporters take their facts

from other reporters without checking for validity, choosing instead to put their efforts into getting soundbites from politicians (who make up the vast majority of quoted media sources). We never hear, for instance, that the money lost from tax cheating by the rich dwarfs all welfare aid to the poor. Or that the increase or decrease of welfare coverage has no statistical effect on out-of-wedlock birth rates. By limiting the debate primarily to male, anti-welfare voices, we lose these crucial observations, and for many voters, whose only

source of facts is the mainstream news, this coverage is nothing more than a political advertisement.

Choices of wording often betray bias as well. The Washington Post routinely labels violent acts by Palestinian terrorism, yet violent Israelis, like Noam Freedman (who gunned down several unarmed Palestinians), sport strange titles like: "an Israeli soldier opposed to accord." As CounterSpin commentator Janine Jackson explained it: "Violent acts by Israelis are explained by 'individual glitches' while violent acts by Palestinians are almost always taken as proof of a group propensity." Speaking of the Middle East, you may remember anti-Arab and anti-Muslim sentiments during the Oklahoma City bombing. "Terrorism experts" like Steven Emerson opinions delivered opinions such as: "This was done to inflict as many casualties as possible. That is a Middle Eastern trait." The New York Times made its terrorism conclusions based only the fact that the city has "at least three mosques." You probably never heard about



Art by Kevin Anderson



Iraqi refugee Saher Al-Saidi, whose unborn child was killed when vigilantes threw stones through the windows of her home after 24 hours of straight news coverage blaming Muslims for the bombing. This story, as well as other instances of violence against Muslims, will surely not be included in media retrospectives of the bombing.

One of *CounterSpin*'s more compelling examples of media "spin" is the story of Karen Palmer, who was kidnapped and raped at gunpoint on Oct 3, 1995. Palmer sold her story to NBC because she "felt very strongly that we as women need to break the silence about rape," and wanted to "put a face on rape survivors." Her story was made the subject of a one-hour Dateline special which was called "Screams in the Night" and was aired on Dec. 4. After getting a hold of a review copy of the show, Palmer was outraged with the handling of her story and organized against NBC, succeeding in changing a few, but not all of the show's faulty elements.

The special's version of the facts was that Palmer was a naive rape victim whose experience inspired her to become an activist and fight the police for justice. The program begins with Mrs. Palmer's driving away from a candlelight vigil protesting violence against women... on the night of the O.J. Simpson verdict. Indeed much of the program's content dealt with O.J. Simpson, a subject guaranteed to arouse interest, and was peppered with voice-overs by Maria Shriver like: "she grew up... just a few blocks from O.J. Simpson. The night he was set free would turn out to be the worst night of her life," and "she couldn't stop thinking about the verdict."

But according to Palmer, this simply wasn't her story. First of all, Palmer was hardly naive. She had been a long time activist, which was partly why she was later able to publicly organize against NBC so effectively. Secondly, the O.J. Simpson verdict had nothing to do with her rape. Palmer's real story concerned her struggle with the racism she encountered in the Santa Monica police department.

One of Palmer's main problems with the show was that it featured a gradual revealing of composite sketch of her rapist-done for dramatic effect. The problem was that not only had Palmer never before seen the sketch, but it looked nothing like her attacker. The sketch was so generic, in fact, that the Santa Monica police department could, and did, use it to arrest young black men at random. Palmer was able to later document that half a dozen young black men were picked up for her rape and held for days without phone calls or charges being made-and many of them didn't even resemble the already erroneous sketch.

None of this information was part of NBC's original report, at least partly because it didn't fit the program's "theme" of connecting black violence to the O.J. Simpson verdict. Palmer was later told that her activism had been left out because it would "lose their audience". NBC apparently couldn't imagine how an anti-rape activist could also be anti-racism.

These stories are just a tiny sampling of a growing trend of sloppy reporting and downright subversion by corporate and politically slanted interests in mind. I have included these examples not to create a tight narrative of media abuses, but as individual examples. There is no organized media conspiracy. But we **must**

question the collective effects of corporate and political influences on the news. When a limited set of interests controls the news and regulates content to fit their own views there is a word for it: "propaganda".

Press coverage is supposed to be balanced-presenting all sides of a story. But often this "balanced" coverage is "balanced" between two relatively similar positions—representing only the views among powerful politicians and lobbyists in Washington.

Fewer than 15 corporations control the daily circulation of newspapers. This number is constantly shrinking. The press is supposedly a public forum, yet you need millions of dollars to even start an medium sized newspaper, billions to buy space on the supposedly "public airwaves" to start a radio or television station. You will have to rely on advertisers and thus bow to their interests. Even then every other news source will do its best to wipe you out economically. Imagine the *Hermes* competing with *Time Magazine*-or the *Argus* competing with *The Washington Times*. When free speech costs both millions and censorship of the original message, the speech is hardly free.

*I welcome any comments or criticism- email me:
atipson@wesleyan.edu*

*FAIR's online archives:
Extra!*

<http://www.igc.apc.org/fair/extra/best-of-extra/>

FAIR
<http://www.igc.apc.org/fair/>

CounterSpin

<http://www.webactive.com/webactive/content/cspin.html>



G u e r i l l a C o o k i n g

recipes for fighting The Man

By The Fearless Cook

We here at *Hermes* like to think of ourselves as progressive, even radical, and to prove it, we not infrequently publish rambling opinion pieces on our own political convictions, whether anarchist, communist, or environmentalist. In that grand tradition, I have compiled this "how-to" manual for the kitchenless on getting the most out of your fire hazards.

Because illicit cuisine is a political statement best kept from the running dogs of ResLife, it's less of a battle cry than, say, informing the readers of *Hermes* about your political beliefs. On the other hand, it can be enacted daily in ways that the authors of all those articles cannot or do not enact anarchy and communism.

Many of you probably have hot pots in which you make ramen noodles. Think bigger. At Bradlees (a unionized workplace, no less) you can get any number of dorm-

ready appliances. Electric skillets run a little under \$30. Non-broiler toaster ovens are

about \$40. Woks, rice and vegetable steamers, microwaves, bread makers, and crock pots are also available, and can be concealed without too much difficulty. Get a couple friends together, think about what you want to cook, and each invest in an appliance (or part of one). Add a knife, a couple pieces of tupperware that can be used for mixing, storage, or eating out of, and a cutting board (though an old textbook will also do), and you're ready to cook.

There are a number of obvious things to cook. You can make pasta in a wok or a skillet, though you can't make all that much of it in the skillet. Scrambled or fried eggs, pancakes, and french toast are all easily made in a skillet, as are most kinds of plain meat, if you're the kind of anti-revolutionary redneck who eats flesh. If, however, you are Aiding The Cause by eating your vegetables, stir fries are also easy to make in those appliances, provided that you can find acceptable vegetables at Weshop, which has some prepared sauces and potential sauce ingredients for the more creative or competent.

Weshop also has an amazing stock of canned beans. Canned beans are your friend. Refried beans can

be added to sauted onions and garlic, put on tortillas with lettuce, sour cream, salsa, and cheese and called tacos. Add rice and they're burritos. Black beans are good with onions, garlic, green peppers, and tomatoes. If you're lazy, just heat them with salsa. Cumin or curry powder also make black beans more interesting. White beans (if you're being traditional—kidney beans also work), spinach, and garlic make beans and greens, which has the added benefit of rhyming.

Curry is also easy to make if you have a skillet. Use Instant India paste, crushed tomatoes, cream or coconut milk, and water for the sauce, messing around with the proportions some to figure out how spicy and how runny you like your curry. Potatoes, chick peas, and onions make a good base for your curry, though potatoes always have to cook for longer than you'd think. If you have a microwave or toaster oven, cook

them in that until they're nearly done, then put them into the skillet with the rest of your ingredients.

Toaster ovens are obviously good to heat things in, but Bobolis get old quickly, and you can actually bake in the ovens. The Neon Deli usually carries the kind of cupcake

papers that don't require a muffin tin, so you can make cupcakes or muffins. If you can stop eating the dough before it's all gone, you can have actual cookies. Sliced apples, butter, brown sugar, and oatmeal make apple crisp. Bisquick boxes have a really easy biscuit recipe (and Bisquick can also be used for pancakes). Baked potatoes are always good. Weshop sells mix for potato knishes, which are good with apple sauce, sour cream, and lots of salt.

Combining 1 tablespoon of brown sugar, 3/4 cup sour cream, 3/4 cup plain yogurt, 1 teaspoon worcestershire sauce, 1/2 cup mustard, 1/4 teaspoon pepper, 2 teaspoons dried basil, and some salt and heating it makes a sauce that's excellent on either chicken or sauted green beans. And for really excellent mashed potatoes, boil diced potatoes and a few cloves of garlic in milk and then mash it all together.

I don't recommend doing it every night (too many dishes, for one thing), but cooking in your room can save you walking up all those stairs in the campus center or waiting in line at Weswings—on top of providing you with better food. And don't forget, it's Resistance.

Because illicit cuisine is a political statement best kept from the running dogs of ResLife, it's less of a battle cry than, say, informing the readers of *Hermes* about your political beliefs.





Nuclear Fallout at Home

Activism for the Whole Family

BY BRIAN EDWARDS-TIECKERT

"3 Mile Island was releasing radiation for three days before they told anyone."

Sal Mangiagli eats as he drives, like a trucker. He holds his bagel in one hand, his coffee in the other; god only knows how he manages the wheel.

"At 3 Mile Island, they told pregnant women to leave the area for a five mile

radius. They had a voluntary evacuation of 40 miles—ripple effect."

The gearshift, protruding from the steering wheel, has some twenty hair bands hanging from it. A yellow one holds back Sal's long black ponytail; the yellow-jacket colors peek through the space between headrest and seat.

"I know a guy on the emergency board," he says. He's talking about Haddam, CT, where Sal and his family live a mile away from a nuclear power plant. "He said if that reactor ever goes, he's gonna go to the package store, bust open a window, grab a couple of bottles of liquor, and sit down on the corner and watch."

"Why?" asks his son Cody from the passenger seat.

"Because if that reactor goes, he doesn't think there's anything he can do."

The speedometer, like the car, refuses to go over 50 miles per hour. Next to it, an orange warning light advises the driver to check engine soon. The car is an ancient station wagon, in the best tradition of domestic automobiles. It's a Buick Impala, and the inside is a sea of aging red vinyl broken only by a few islands of scratched and peeling fake wood trim. The smell of the vinyl, familiar and somehow comforting, saturates the air inside the car.

"A few years ago at our plant," he laughs wryly. "It's our plant, now ... They had a problem because something was boiling the water that was in the reactor vessel. They had a nitrogen bubble that was build-

ing up, and it was forcing the coolant water out of the reactor up onto the floor of the containment room. The nitrogen bubble had been building for three days, they didn't know why, they didn't know how to stop it ..."

Sal waves across two pedestrians in a crosswalk.

"They were getting ready to take the rods out, so they had disconnected their temperature gauges, their water level gauges—they had no idea this was going on."

At a town meeting following the incident

nobody, including Haddam selectwoman Marge DuBold, could say when or if the surrounding towns had been notified that there was an emergency situation. "I wanted to go up to the podium and say 'What do you mean you don't remember if you got a call from the reactor saying 'Cross your fingers, Marge, it might blow?'" He looks across at his son, Cody. "You don't remember?" I mean, Bullshit!"

In the trunk, the cardboard faces of piled-up protest signs squeak against a pane of Plexiglas Sal used to replace a broken window. Signposts jut out the rear. Behind them trails a twenty-two foot long, nine foot high, silver-painted fiberglass barbell decorated with radiation signs and stenciled letters that read "MOCK NUCLEAR WASTE CASK."

"Pretty cool, huh?" Sal says in a one-sided dia-

Beyond those tree-covered hillsides is a nuclear reactor that's slowly irradiating the surrounding area, and the town is full of people too scared to confront it.

The giant barbell hitched to Sal's station wagon is a close model of the real casks. The major difference is that the real thing would contain 20 times the radioactivity released by the Hiroshima bomb.

logue with the drivers that stare as they pass by. He's decked out in a white paper jumpsuit, a painter's uniform; it's supposed to look like a radiation suit. On the seat next to him is a black rubber gas mask that he doesn't wear when he drives because it fogs up too much. He nudges it toward his 11-year-old son and

asks, "Wanna wear the mask, Code?"

The costumes and the cask are props to help raise awareness about a new bill in the Senate, S-104. The bill provides for the transportation and storage of almost 40 years' accumulation of high-level radioactive waste from nuclear power plants across the coun-



try. It revokes regulations concerning site suitability to approve Yucca Mountain, Nevada as a dump for the dirty laundry of the atomic age.

More immediately, the bill would pre-empt national, state, and local environmental laws in transporting over 1,300 casks of radioactive waste along the Connecticut highway system. Transport routes would pass through major cities like Hartford; the resources the bill sets up to deal with the possibility of an accident are pitifully inadequate. The giant barbell hitched to Sal's station wagon is a close model of one of these casks. The major difference is that the real thing would contain 20 times the radioactivity released by the Hiroshima bomb.

All of which is why Sal Mangiagli is spending his Saturday afternoon wearing a paint suit and towing around a 22 foot fiberglass dumbbell. He's traveling along I-84, which would carry the bulk of the shipments, and stopping in downtowns and shopping centers to hand out flyers and talk to people about the bill.

Sal looks in the rearview mirror and points out his wife, Rosemary, following behind him. The two of them run the Haddam chapter of the Citizen's Awareness Network [CAN] out of their home. Four college activists, decked out in paint suits and clutching flyers and pamphlets photocopied just that morning, ride with her.

When Rosemary drives with Cody up front, she lets him shift gears while she keeps up a constant chat-

ter. Cody bends over the gearshift while she snakes her arm behind the passenger seat and faces the back of the car. She wears short hair, seashell earrings, and hand-woven necklaces; she's beautiful.

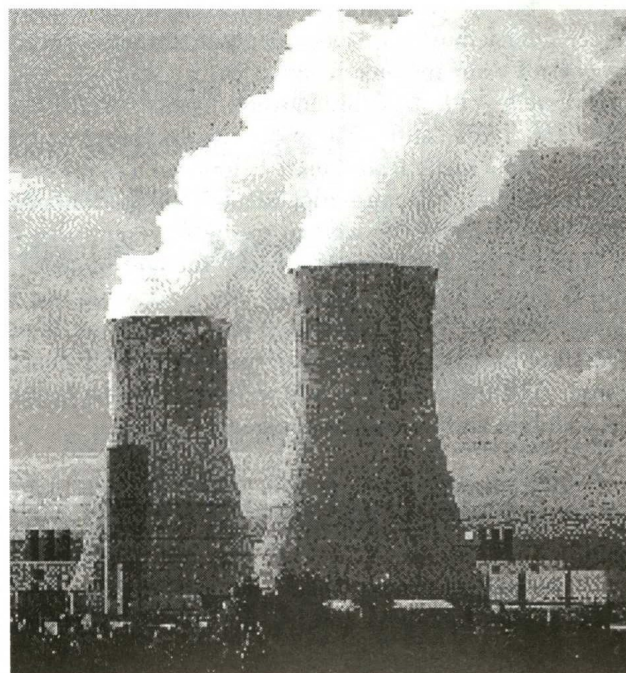
"Did you all see the front page of the *Middletown Press*?" It's lying on the back seat. The headline article is about the closing of the Haddam nuclear power plant, the plant in her town, the plant she and Sal played an instrumental role in focusing public attention on. Word for word, the article is practically identical to the press release Rosemary and Sal put out. "They printed the whole damn thing, it's great!" She tells Cody to shift into reverse. "People are really starting to look to CAN for comments."

The car is a clean, fairly new, Chevrolet Celebra. Blues Traveler plays on the radio, cassettes are piled up in the back: Joan Armatrading, Roger Daltry, Mac Parker, and The Clash. On top of the dashboard is the obligatory grade school art project: a bird made of Styrofoam, construction paper, and a couple of dyed feathers. Extra napkins are pinned behind the visor on the driver's side. A large bag full of bagels and cream cheese rests in the center of the car.

Rosemary pulls into a parking lot next to the cask. She has Cody put the car in park and then sends him over to Sal with his coffee; she ruffles his hair as he leaves. "He just got a haircut, we're trying to break him away from the hoody look." She roots through the bag of bagels and surfaces with a fistful of napkins which she waves around indignantly: "Look at how many napkins they gave us, I hate this ... you know what we use them for, when we run out? Toilette paper!"

Sal describes how he and Rosemary met:

"Rosemary's brother owns a diner in West Hartford; and she was working there in the mornings



ENVIRONMENT

HERMES March, 1997



when he first opened to help out. I was working a job in Simsbury, living in Hartford, and stopping at the Quaker Diner for breakfast every morning ... it was the end of '87, nine years ago." Rosemary graduated from Southern and became a research chemist in 1982.

"She had been to Greece about three times, to spend a couple of months or so at a time. And she fell in love with this guy in Greece, and he asked her to marry him, and she said 'yeah' and so they were engaged."

Sal speaks without periods. Each relaxed sentence ambles into the next; concepts drift through his speech with a blatant disregard for structure and form. The only way he punctuates his speech is with the words "um" and "you know," both of which he stretches out deliciously, as if to savor his next words before he speaks them.

"When Rosemary and I met, I had been separated from my ex-wife for about eight months, and going through a custody battle for the children, and I was—you know—just talking to her, we would go out together with some of her friends or even with her mother; her mom was really into jazz so we used to go to some jazz clubs together and stuff..."

Sal's arm snakes around the passenger seat as he checks a turn. "And we'd get into these conversations: I'd say, 'So, are you going to move to Greece or is your fiancé gonna move to America?' And she sez 'Oh, no he doesn't want to come to America, we wanna—you know, we'll—I'll probably move to Greece.' And I sez 'Oh' and I sez 'and what will you do there'—you know—'Is he really traditional? Is he from a really traditional family?' Because they're a lot like the Italians, they kind of chain the woman to the stove and that's it. And it's the first time she really thought about it, and it flipped her out, she said 'My God, what am I doing?' She sez 'No, I don't want that.' And I sez 'Well what are you guys gonna do?' And she sez 'I don't know.' And then, three or four months later she broke up with him and we started going out."

Sal's bringing the cask to a couple of malls right off of I-84. Cody asks him if he'll buy him a hat at the mall.

"As long as it's not Nike," Sal replies. Nike does business with Indonesia and has much of its manufac-

turing tied up in the forced-labor camps of East Timor. "In fact, I ordered a couple of things for you. I got you a comic book on Michael Jordan."

"A comic book?"

Sal and Rosemary are raising two children, Cody is eleven going on 'twelveteen,' and Nicole is 14. "My son really loves Nike stuff." He laughs. "And he was questioning me on why I wouldn't buy Nike stuff even after I had told him why. Then after a while he wanted to know more, and we ended up writing a letter. We found out that the head CEO of Nike is this man named Philip Knight and we got his address and we wrote him a letter.

"What Cody said in his letter was that—you know—'My dad won't let me buy any of your stuff, and I really like your stuff, and he says that you do business with butchers, that Indonesia has invaded East Timor ... and if this is true then I'm gonna tell all my friends not to buy your stuff too.' And he signed it and he put his age down on it and Philip Knight never wrote back."

He pulls a half-smoked, hand-rolled cigarette out of the ashtray and starts smoking it. The tobacco is American Spirit, a brand grown organically and

marketed without any unnatural additives.

"Nicole has taken a stand on quite a few issues and she's really quite good about it ... One of the things that I found that I needed to explain to her was that at the same time that I wanted her to engage like that, and to stand up for things that she believed in, I wanted to make sure that she had a really good reason for it, because especially as a young teenager you can do that and you can sorta get off just on the response, regardless of what the cause is." He takes a long drag on his cigarette.

One time Nicole challenged a teacher who refused to answer a student's question on the grounds that he should have paid attention the first time. The teacher wound up apologizing and thanking her a week later. "She [Nicole] was really pretty diplomatic about it ... It's really great to see that. I know when I was her age I was oblivious to taking a stand on issues and, you know, I never saw my parents go to town meetings or engage in activism or education and community issues and stuff." He takes a last drag on the cigarette and throws it out the window.

"I know a guy on the emergency board. He said if that reactor ever goes, he's gonna go to the package store, but open a window, grab a couple of bottles of liquor, and sit down on the corner and watch."

"Why?"

"Because if that reactor goes, he doesn't think there's anything he can do."

In the space where wind shrieks between the rumbling cask and the aging station wagon, three bumper stickers cling to the car just above the rusted-out bumper:

"1-888-NADER96"

"DARE to keep the CIA off Drugs"

"My Daughter Achieves"

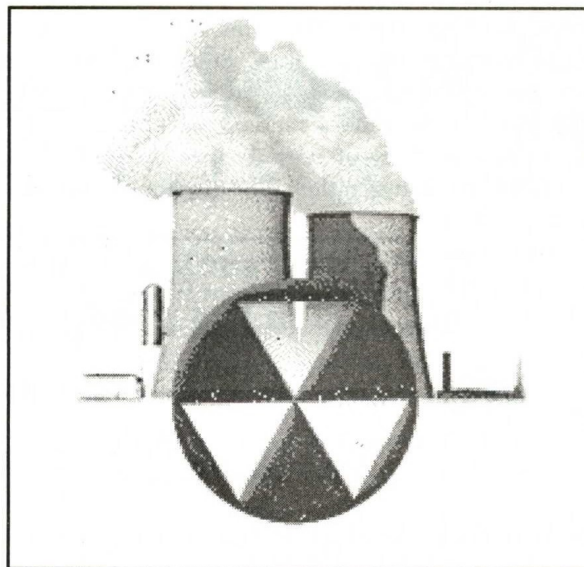
The first stop that the cask makes is Fleet Bank; Sal needs to withdraw money to pay three members who canvass (solicit donations) for CAN. Sal gracefully parks the cask across three spaces and enters the bank. His small, trim body, clothed in white and capped with a black beret, is a striking figure in the empty parking lot; before he can get back to his car he's approached by a woman who asks if he's with Greenpeace. He hands her some literature and talks about the S-104. Thirty feet away from the cask, he detours to a standing van and passes some literature through the window to the driver.

"You guys, he is not my husband." Rosemary laughs as she watches from her car.

It's important to reach everybody... but all the same, you sometimes catch yourself wondering if Sal has an off switch. Sal talks nuclear waste to neighbors he sees in supermarkets, with other parents at Little League games, with strangers in the printshop where he copies his "litterature." When he eats out he talks nuclear waste to the waitresses and gives them flyers to read after work. The cashier gets a pamphlet with the paid check.

Sal and Rosemary's interest in activism is as new as their marriage. Sal can't exactly remember what got him started: "I've talked to people about it since I've become active, and I remember even when I was just out of high school ... My sister's boyfriend at the time

to a line of traffic, Sal blocks two lanes with the giant dumbbell.



"When George Bush announced his run for presidential candidacy, that really galvanized a lot of things for me ... I felt I needed to learn a lot more about politics and stuff because to have the head of the CIA be our president was a really scary thought to me." Sal waves his thanks to a Buick that lets him into the lane.

"And then living in a reactor community—we bought our house [and] didn't consider at all that we were a mile away from a nuclear reactor. It took a few years before it started to sink in, and then some very close friends of ours who live up in Roe Massachusetts, Deb and Fred Katz"—Deb is the president of CAN—"They were also living under the same kind of denial and their reactor was struck by lightning. Actually

Yankee Roe and Vermont Yankee were both taken out, in the same electrical storm. And it woke them up. And we've been involved with them from the very beginning." A passing driver honks three times and flashes a thumbs-up at Sal. He waves back and smiles.

Sal's relaxed, drifting speech patterns become a tactical advantage as the guard contradicts himself several times, anxiously trying to finish the conversation. The impact of what the guard says is consistent, however. The parking lot is private property.

worked for the oil company, driving fuel for Hess Oil out of Weathersfield and [he] had said to me—'you know—I could get you a job at the oil company.' And I said 'I don't wanna work for no oil company.' I sort of had the same beliefs for a long time but they were more subconscious ... And then the same thing happened with Pepsi, I was offered a job to drive for Pepsi and I refused it." Pulling out of a narrow street and up

Sal and Rosemary try to set up in two mall parking lots right off I-84. They're kicked out of both after about five minutes. At one mall, Sal asks to speak to the supervisor of security. Rosemary just wants to leave.

"He's such a damn outlaw," Rosemary mutters. "I'm the goody two-shoes, he's the bad boy."



The supervisor arrives in an electric car with three muscular guards. His conversation alternates friendly exchanges with veiled threats; Sal strings him along, looking for inconsistencies, loopholes, trying to trip the guard up. "Don't finish his sentences, let him stumble over his own thoughts" he advised his wife before the supervisor arrived. Sal's relaxed, drifting speech patterns become a tactical advantage as the guard contradicts himself several times, anxiously trying to finish the conversation. The impact of what the guard says is consistent, however. The parking lot is private property.

Rosemary thanks the guard, anxious to leave.

"Here, let me give you some of our litterature," says Sal.

When the guards have left in their tiny electric cart and the cardboard signs are being returned to the rear of the rusting station wagon, Rosemary says she thought the guard was nice.

"Oh, you think everyone's nice." Says Sal. When she's out of earshot, he goes further: "She's a bunny, she's a rabbit, and rabbits don't like anything confrontational."

Rosemary takes Cody home and Sal bundles the other white-suited pamphlet-pushers into his decrepit old station wagon. They'll go to downtown Hartford and maybe a few supermarkets, just like the week before. Sal and Rosemary, idling next to other at the first intersection, blow kisses and mouth endearments through rolled-up windows.

When you call Sal and Rosemary's home in the evening, it's usually one of the kids that picks up. They ask for your name and a second later you hear them shouting for a parent in the distance. In the background, it's not unlikely to hear the the familiar sounds of The Simpsons or Seinfeld on the TV. Upon entering the house, the greatest danger you face is their zealously friendly black lab Nugget. The house is full of the smell of woodsmoke in the winter. It's surrounded by tree-covered hillsides. Everything seems perfect, an idyllic model of rural suburban living.

The town is far from idyllic, however. Beyond those tree-covered hillsides is a nuclear reactor that's slowly irradiating the surrounding area, and the town

is full of people to scared to confront it. Although CAN has over 200 donors in the Haddam area, Sal and Rosemary are the only two active members.

"One of the issues that we were addressing was the issue of routine emissions of radio-nucleides out of these reactors, out of the stack, and gaseous releases and also liquid batch releases into the Connecticut River." This creates what's called an effluent pathway, a small area "downstream" from the reactor that receives much higher doses of radiation than anywhere else. "When the

**"He's such a damn outlaw," Rosemary mutters.
"I'm the goody two-shoes, he's the bad boy."**

National Institute of Health does health studies, they do a twenty mile radius around the reactor ... They really dilute the impacted people living in this effluent pathway by including all of this other data in it."

A study on Deer River valley, a pathway area near the Yankee Roe reactor, showed a 50% increase in five different cancers, a 40% increase in heart disease, a 110% increase in infectious disease leading to mortality, and a 700-1000% increase in children born with Down's Syndrome. "I think people are terrified to look at that, and to believe that could be true." Sal says.

Not everyone in Haddam is happy to see the reactor decommissioned; the company that owns it pays

"When George Bush announced his run for presidential candidacy, that really galvanized a lot of things for me...I felt I needed to learn a lot more about politics and stuff because to have the head of the CIA be our president was a really scary thought to me."

half of the community's property taxes.

One day Sal's wife came home to a hate sign planted up on the lawn, close to the window where it could be seen clearly from inside. "It said that we were hypocrites, and if we didn't like nuclear power to get the fuck out of town." Sal sighs, then smiles devilishly.

"It's good to know that we're effective ... We've gotten a lot more calls from people thanking us."



Student contributions to destroying the world: anonymous thoughts

by john kampf

The following is what happens when you place a sheet of paper on a bulletin board, provide writing utensils, and pose the question, "Are you truly not narrow if you have a pink triangle on your door that says 'Straight but not narrow?'"

The intention of the question was not only to spark dialogue, but to encourage

people to think critically about something that could simply be passed off as another example of Wesleyan liberalism.

A double space marks the beginning of another student's thoughts. All but one of the students wrote anonymously. For consistency, all entries are anonymous. Moreover, who wrote what is irrelevant.

Yes, you are not narrow. In this situation someone is saying they are as sure they are straight as many gays are sure they are gay. If it makes you a jerk to say they can't be sure they're gay, it makes you a jerk to say they can't be sure they're straight. Someone knows how they feel and respects how other people feel too. There's nothing wrong with that. In fact, that's exactly how it should be. And if anything, scrutinizing anyone for saying they're "straight but not narrow" is the narrow-minded, overly critical option. In order for everyone to get along, there's a certain amount

"If it makes you a jerk to say they can't be sure they're gay, it makes you a jerk to say they can't be sure they're straight."

of shit that we shouldn't stir up—especially when someone is trying to make things work out.

"Who cares? There's nothing to be afraid of"

Why is it necessary to advertise sexuality? "Straight but not narrow" is more a symbol of sexual preference insecurity than sexual preference equality; and insecurity breeds discrimination. If a person finds it necessary to broadcast his/her sexual preferences, he/she cannot look at others in an unbiased fashion. Such statements as "straight but not narrow" don't topple but reinforce the walls of misunderstanding between people of opposite sexuality.

If you're so "not narrow" there should be no reason to proclaim your sexuality. Moreover, there would

be an unnecessary disparity if a hall had some triangles reading "straight but not narrow," and some that were blank. It's like, "Here are the superior triangles, and here are the inferior triangles."

The reason to have a pink triangle that says "straight but not narrow" isn't to "proclaim" one's sexuality; rather it is, as you say, a show of support. It is to "proclaim" that the person, despite not being affiliated with gays and lesbians originally, is showing support.

It's like, "Here are some straight people. Here are some gay people." It doesn't matter; people are trying to tell the truth, not make judgments.

Qualifying your pink triangle with a "but don't get me wrong, I'm straight" phrase written on it is coping out a bit. I'd say, let people think you are gay for a few days. Who cares? There's nothing to be afraid

"Such statements as 'straight but not narrow' don't topple but reinforce the walls of misunderstanding between people of opposite sexuality."

of.

This is not worth getting excited over.

Who's excited?





klekolo coffee world

A Sampler

B Y L I V I A G E R S H O N

"Nobody really liked me at school. I was a grade-A loser. Just being treated like that all my life made me a better person—I'm open to everything and everyone. All the people that were so-called 'accepted' in school were so narrow-minded. They were only accepted because they looked like everybody else and acted like everybody else."

Sound familiar? No, this is not a Wesleyan student speaking. It's a member of another embittered, anti-Establishment group in Middletown—the kids who hang out at Klekolo. And if you ever learned to ride a skateboard, mourned the death of Jerry Garcia, or stayed up late debating obscure philosophies about how to live in a world of violence and hypocrisy, you have more in common with these people than you might think.

Last semester, I talked with some of Klekolo's young, non-Wesleyan patrons as part of a writing project. In the process, I rediscovered the fact that people outside my usual experience deal with a lot of the same personal and political issues that I do. And many of them are trying to deal with them in ways that are radically different from what anyone I know at Wesleyan is doing. So this composite sketch

of an evening at Klekolo is here to provide examples of what some people our age who aren't busy thinking about their next paper are doing. All the names have been changed because I didn't get explicit permission to write this article from most of the people I talked to.

Heading down the street toward Klekolo, I notice two men in their mid-twenties smoking hand-rolled cigarettes in the doorway. One is wearing a dirty baja and has a handkerchief tied around his head. The other, in a Bum Equipment sweat shirt, yells out to me as I walk by, "I have the acid. I have the acid." His friend turns to him in disbelief and says "Do you know her? Are you *on* the acid?" "No, but I wish I was," he answers. He grins, and his shaggy brown bangs fall over his eyes.

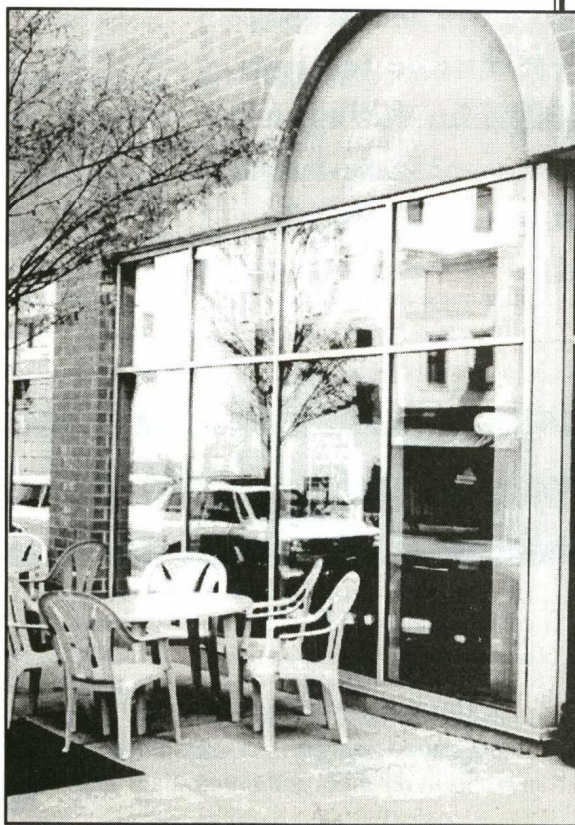
They finish their cigarettes and lead me into Klekolo. As one of them opens the door, we are enveloped in steamy warmth and the smells of flavored coffees, hot milk and herbal tea. We take a table by the huge window. Like several other groups around the room, we order nothing, and nobody seems to mind. Next to us, two thirtyish men with tattoos and leather jackets are talking intensely over coffee and cake. Two Wesleyan students I know wave to me from the back of the shop.

Andy, the one who may or may not have the acid, just left his apartment because of roommate troubles. When I ask if he's looking for a new place, he shrugs and says "Sure." Then he adds, "But I might just stick my thumb out and go."

Andy, and the other man, Jim, a sometimes skateboarder, have experience just going. Both of them left school, followed the Grateful Dead, and went to Rainbow Family Gatherings all over the country. "I dropped out of high school because I wanted to travel," Jim says, "and just because I don't like school that much."

Jim is passionate about Rainbow Gatherings. Talking about them, he bobs his long-haired head and, by way of contrast, repeatedly indicates a tiny tree planted outside in a planter sunk into the middle of the sidewalk. "Look around," he says, "There's one little tree over there in the cement." He pronounces it "cee-ment."

At Gatherings, he says, "there's no money, pretty much. Most people just bring food. They set up a kitchen or something like that. It's all vegetarian food—most of it's vegan. It's a lot like the Grateful Dead tour was, except it's outside. They camp out instead of going to a show inside a building. And [Deadheads were] real tribalistic inside the





building, but you can't really get the full effect, I think, unless you're living outside together in the mountains or woods somewhere."

Like many people who consider themselves part of the Rainbow Family, Jim uses the Gatherings as a vantage point from which to criticize mainstream U.S. society. "People are trying to go further and further toward the government, toward Babylon, as the Gathering would call it. Buildings, computers. And if they keep going that far, there's not going to

"People are trying to go further and further toward the government, toward Babylon, as the Gathering would call it. Buildings, computers. And if they keep going that far, there's not going to be any trees left, and that sucks."

be any trees left, and that sucks. I think that people don't realize that if there's no oxygen left, how are they going to get out of their house? How are they going to go to the bank to cash their million-dollar check if there's not air to breathe? [At Gatherings] you don't have much money, most kids, so you really learn to not use things you don't need. So you only have things that you need. You don't really need a lot of money.

"It's a shock coming back," Jim concludes, "like a culture shock."

Tony, meanwhile, is writing a book, about "how to live for free." He says it's easiest to do out West, in Oregon especially. That's where he's planning to go unless the computer consulting business he and a friend have picks up. Sitting at Klekolo, he pulls a disk containing what he's written out of the back pocket of his jeans.

He and Jim get into a conversation about whether it's safe to carry it like that and if it's in danger of being crushed. Andy bends it back and forth as a demonstration. "But you know how you slide it?" Jim asks, "What if you move your butt around and the window slides open?"

Andy is eager to offer an example of the sort of advice his book gives, specifically, how to scam food from Burger King. It's complicated. First you have to trick the telephone company out of a free call to the restaurant, and then you have to convince the manager that they gypped you out of part of your order. "You tell them you're very disappointed, you're at home, and Uncle Jack didn't get his whopper. He's a little pissed. He's blowing steam right

now, and you'd like to come down for your whopper. Bang, there you go."

Neither of the men seem to have any regrets about dropping out of high school. They say they've learned more by travelling, and anyway, high school sucks. "It was really cliquey from what I experienced," Andy says, "I just got tired of it after a while. You've got your preppies, and Mommy and Daddy buy them everything that they possibly ever could need. Then you've got the average people that just go there to learn. And you've got the computer nerds, and the people that are bookworms, whatever."

Jim adds that he dislikes public schools because of their power structures as well as their social scenes. "I don't like the teachers either, because they tell you what it's important for you to learn. They're telling you what you're interested in." As he talks, Jim starts rolling a cigarette. Andy asks if he can have one, but Jim refuses because, he says, he has only two papers left. "If you're not interested in a specific thing," Jim continues, "I don't think you should have to study it. People have enough brains—even if they're stupid—to decide if they want to do this or that. And they should be able to."

As I leave the table, I ask them if they have anything else to say. Jim shakes his head. Andy grins and says, "Don't eat the 'ludes. That's it."

Later, I buy a cup of organic mocha coffee.

Frank graduated from high school in Middletown. When I ask him what he does not, he says, "I live." He adds, "I just play records and skateboard and work and hang out with my friends, and have good experiences."

Adding sugar at the condiments table, I notice Andy talking on a pay phone in the alcove by the bathrooms. "Ok, I understand. Can I speak to your manager?" It takes a minute for me to believe that he's really doing this. "Yeah," he continues, "I got an order about an hour ago, and you forgot my whopper with cheese."

In one corner of Klekolo is a set of bookshelves containing several dozen books. Among them are *Africa Adorned*, two dictionaries, *How to Draw Cartoons*, and *Favorite Poems of Emily Dickinson*. Behind the shelves is a table covered in toys including a chess set and a push-button plastic basketball game. Next to the table, two twentyish



guys are sprawled on the pillows of round wicker lounge chairs. On the yellow wall above them, two paintings show screaming faces, distorted bodies and psychedelic swirls and lines. One of the men, Frank, wears a knit cap that makes his head look small and very round. He gazes at me through bleary eyes as I walk toward him. The other, Andre, the one who calls himself a "grade-A loser," has stringy red hair, a short red beard and a smiley-face-with-gunshot-wound baseball cap.

The two of them once ran a skate park in

"We come in here and drink a lot of coffee. We've been kicked out of other places for drinking coffee all night. We've never been cut off here. We've danced in the aisles, and nobody's told us to leave.

That's good."

Middletown, in what is now a used car lot. "My dad owned a store there," says Andre, "and he saw in the paper that someone wanted to get rid of a vert ramp. He told me that if I wanted to take it and start a skate park I could. So we started with that and then we got some ramps from the playground skate park when they shut down, and we worked with that. Then we borrowed some stuff and got stuff donated. We found some couches at Rent Town."

Frank grins, "Yeah, Rent Town."

"We had concerts every weekend. Me and Frank lived there for the whole summer. It was real fun. And we just had a lot of people going down there. We met a lot of friends that we still have. And we all still skate in Middletown. But the insurance company took away—well they didn't know about it, we didn't have insurance, and so they came and said 'you can't have that.'"

Frank graduated from high school in Middletown. When I ask him what he does now, he says "I live." He adds, "I just play records and skateboard and work and hang out with my friends, and have good experiences."

I ask Andre what he does. He says, "I work here [at Klekolo] and I skateboard and I hang out." I ask him what his plans for the future are. He says, "Probably working at Klekolo and skateboarding and hanging out."

Outside, three people are sitting in the narrow doorway area between the coffee shop and the neon-decorated door of City Hair Design. A hand-lettered sign above them reads "Please do Not Hang-Out in the Doorway. Thank you." I sit down beside them. In the hour we sit talking, several Klekolo workers walk in and out past us without ever asking us to leave or even giving us a dirty look.

Sandy, who wears her hair in blond-dyed-pink dreadlocks, immediately begins talking in a quick, upbeat tone that makes her sound much younger than her twenty-two years. She's wrapping her hands around her coffee cup to absorb the heat. She tells me she and her boyfriend Ryan, who sits beside her, are both on Ritalin, apparently recreationally. Both of them are wearing dull brown jackets, and he wears a maroon beret. Dan, the third person sitting with them, introduces himself and then sits patiently, listening to them telling stories, and

waits for his chance to talk. Several times in the course of the conversation he asks me questions like "Is this what you're looking for?" or "Should we move on to something else?" He has short brown hair and a pale,

round face and is twenty-four, slightly older than the other two.

"My best friend Bill just moved in downstairs," Ryan says, by way of explaining what's going on in his life, "Sandy hates him. I love him. He's a good egg."

"He's a Nazi skinhead," Sandy replies matter-of-factly. She doesn't stop smiling and speaks faster and faster as she continues, "I hate Bill, and this is very hard for me because the most important thing is for me to be happy. And lately I've been very happy, but, like, being with Bill makes me unhappy, and I'm trying to maintain my happiness being with Bill."

Ryan resumes his description of what he and Sandy do with their lives. "We come here and drink a lot of coffee. We've been kicked out of other places for drinking coffee all night. We've never been cut off here. We've danced in the aisles, and nobody's told us to leave. That's good."

"I work for my dad," he continues, "I drive a beat-up van with a broken window. It only has AM radio—I have to listen to Rush Limbaugh. I deliver papers." Sandy interrupts to insert a rapid-fire description of Ryan's second part-time job as a lifeguard at the YMCA. The gist is that he liked the job at first but doesn't care for it too much any more.

Ryan riffles through his jacket pockets, pulls out two Camel cigarettes, and holds them together to light them. He draws deeply from both of them and then passes one to Sandy. Dan pulls out his own pack and lights one.

"I'm a waitress," says Sandy, "I work in Newington at AP Peterson Farms. It's pretty much an old-people joint. All these old freaks come in. There's this guy Arnold who comes in, no kidding, six times a day. Doesn't leave a tip. Pretty much just

orders coffee most of the time. Orders everything on untoasted rye bread." Ryan nods at the description. He's met Arnold, and the man is apparently a continual source of amusement for the couple.

Dan begins to talk about his high school experience, but Sandy cuts him off. "Were you out then?" she asks. "Um..." he responds, and turns to me, "Oh, I'm gay." He leans over and shouts into my tape recorder, "I'm gay! Maybe that's interesting. I figured it out my senior year in high school. I was dating a girl who's now a lesbian, so..." Ryan and Sandy laugh and start whispering to each other about how they think they'll both decide they're gay some day. Dan continues, "I think I have some insecurity because I went to school with a lot of Wesleyan professors' children at Middletown High School. And that was a certain clique, it was a large clique too. They were accepting. I sort of hung out with them, but I wasn't exactly one of them. I was on the fringe in a lot of different ways. A lot of them are probably working on their Masters by now, have careers. And I'm still going to college. I'm okay with that, but I wouldn't want to see any of them until I can say 'this is what I do.'"

Ryan grimaces at that. "I want to go back and say 'Yeah, I'm a house husband,'" he answers, glancing at Dan to gauge his response. Dan seems oblivious.

Sandy and Dan both dropped out from out-of-state colleges and are now commuting to schools closer to home. She's currently auditing one class at Central Connecticut College, and he's studying recreational therapy at Middlesex Community College.

"I ended up dropping out of school mid-semester my sophomore year," Sandy says, "Cost my parents ten thousand dollars. At that point I would have been kicked out anyway. I got kicked out of the honors program, lost my scholarships."

Dan sympathizes, "I called my parents crying, saying, 'Come and take me out of here. I have to get out of this school.' My life was just totally chaotic. I think they're amazing in that most parents would be like, 'Well you better do well because we already wasted so much money on this.' They never said that. I'm a big financial drain, and they never say anything about it."

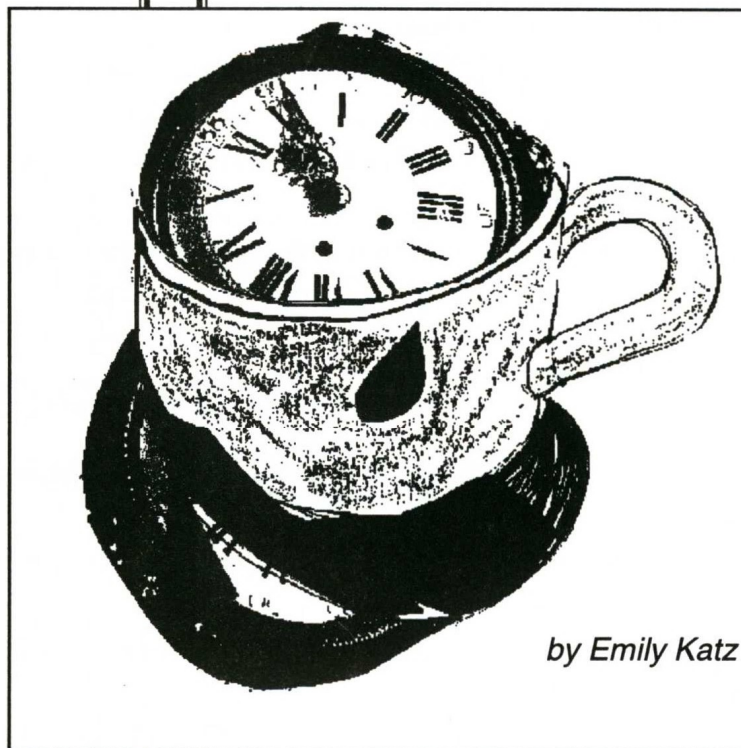
"Same thing with my parents," Sandy nods. Ryan silently lights two more cigarettes as she continues. "I thought they were really cool. Like they drove twelve hours to come down and get me. I came back and they were really supportive. For a month I didn't talk to anybody, just slept, ate, read,

and wrote and didn't do anything. And then I finally got a job."

Klekolo's door opens again, and the last three teenage customers drift out, marveling that it's closing time already. Then the shop's owner and an employee, whose long black hair falls over his chain-covered black leather jacket, carry two bags of garbage to the curb. They return to the doorway, shut off the lights, lock the door, and walk up the sidewalk toward a nearby parking garage, nodding to us as they leave.

"When I think about what I'm going to do with my life now," Sandy continues, "it's so different from what my friends are doing. All my friends are in college, and I'm not even getting credit for the course I'm taking. I feel badly if I think about it, about what I'm doing with my life, but I'm happy now and that's what's important."

As she considers the future, she smiles again, "Ryan and my plan now is we're going to travel across the country, tentatively to Colorado. Just for a couple of years. We want to have a destination but make the trip part of the destination. Visit a lot of



by Emily Katz

friends, have fun. But I'm scared too, because I've never been able to devote myself to one thing. I can see myself being very happy being a college professor or a writer, but to dedicate myself is the point." She shivers as she puts the cigarette to her mouth and then pulls thin knit gloves onto her hands. "Right now I put my energy into being happy with Ryan."



HERMES INDEX

(With apologies to *Harpers Magazine*)

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Sources: 1-2: *Extra! Update* 2/97; 3-5: *New World Rising*, Summer 1995; 6-17: *Live Wild or Die* #6

Debbie Gibson revamped

"Out of the Blue" for the new age

by John Kamp



SOCIETY

Have you ever longed for a '90s version of the '80s smash hit "Out of the Blue" by Deborah Gibson? Finally this pop gem has been tastefully revamped for the new decade.

The original song is listed first for refreshing your memory and drawing comparisons.

Pre-1990

Verse One:

Without you, without you
I always thought that everything
was fine without you
Never knowing you'd be mine
Suddenly my world has changed
And I just wonder why
All it took was just one smile

Chorus:

Now with you, out of the blue
Love appeared before my eyes with
you
A dream come true
I never thought I'd realize what love
was

What love was, what love was. . .

Verse Two:

I need you, oh I need you

And every day I love you more and
more

Without you (dreams and tears)
I know what it's all for
Suddenly I see you there
And everything's OK
Don't know why I feel this way

Chorus:

Here with you

Bridge:

We are together now
Never take my heart away
All the love is found
Is here to stay (out of the blue)
It's like a dream come true
I never thought I'd fall in love with
you

Out of the Blue

Love appeared before my eyes with
you

A dream come true
I never thought
Here with you
Out of the, out of the, out of the
clear blue

Oh it's like a dream come true
I never thought, I never thought
Out of the blue
Before my eyes with you
A dream come true
I never thought I'd fall in love with
you
Out of the, out of the, out of the
clear blue. . .

Post-1990

Poesy One:

Lacking you, sans you
I unceasingly postulated that the
whole shebang was fine minus you
Ne'er fathoming you'd be mine
Without warning, my terrestrial
sphere has mutated
And I just speculate wherefore
All it took was just a lone smirk

Chorale:

Nowadays in the company of you,
at lunch from the blue
Ardor emerged in front of my optic
receiver with you
A mental image come true
I nevermore pondered I'd grasp
what it boiled down to was fondness
What passion was, what it boiled
down to was fondness. . .

Versification Two:

I suffer privation of you, oh I

require you

And each and every daytime I adu-
late you, enhanced and extended
Lacking you (apparitions and
lamentations)
I discern what it's utterly for
Abruptly I spy you thither
And the whole works is validated
Don't comprehend on whose
account I sense in this method

Chorus:

In mundane existence with you

Viaduct:

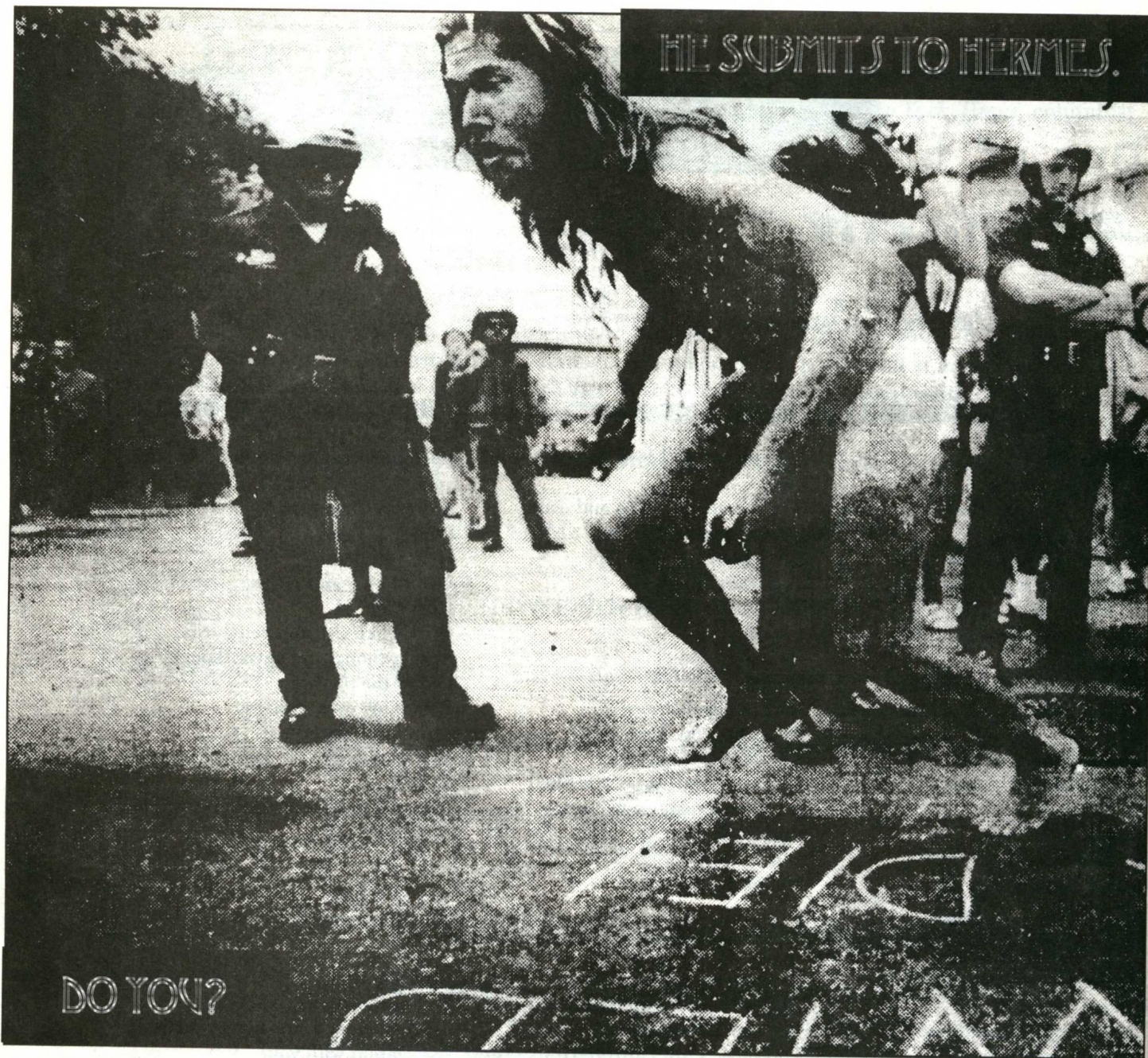
We coincide now
In no way acquire my vascular
organ
All the liking I located
Is on the face of the earth to tarry
(outward from the blue)
It's analogous to a trance come true
I never pondered I'd surrender to

ardor for you

Out of the aqua
Love surfaced ere my eyeballs in
association with you
A dream come true
I never meditated
On earth in the company of you
Away from the, away from the, out-
ward from the limpid cobalt
Oh it's intercomparable to a flight
of fancy come true
I never conceived, I never thought
Out of the Prussian
In front of my eye specks accompa-
nied by you
An image from the mind come true
I never thought I'd fall in love with
you
Out of the, from the, from within
the, away from the crystal-clear teal



HERMES March, 1997



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